

**Minutes of the Carlisle Board of Health
May 25, 2010**

Present: Board Members Jeff Brem Chair, Bill Risso, Mark Caddell; Michael Holland and Cathy Galligan; Linda Fantasia, Agent, Sara Lancaster (Mosquito);

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Heald Room at Town Hall.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER – Brem congratulated Galligan and Risso on being elected to the Board. It will be Risso's third term and Galligan's first.

BOARD REORGANIZATION – Brem said the Selectmen have recommended a limit of two years for chairman position. Brem asked if any other board member was interested. Galligan would prefer to wait before taking on an officer position and Holland may be moving. Caddell said he would like Brem to continue in the position. Risso agreed. Risso offered to continue as clerk/treasurer. Brem asked if Caddell would be vice-chair and he agreed.

The following slate was presented: Chairman – Brem; Vice-Chairman – Caddell; Clerk/Treasurer – Risso. The slate of officers was moved by Caddell and seconded by Risso. Motion passed 4-0-0 (Holland had not arrived).

MINUTES

It was moved (Caddell) and seconded (Risso) to approve the minutes of 5/11/10. Motion passed 4-0-0.

BILLS - It was moved (Risso) and seconded (Galligan) to approve the bills as presented. Motion passed 4-0-0. Risso explained that the bills were mainly salaries.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

- 125 South Street - excavation of the contaminated soil is continuing. Cosmo Gallinaro, a Licensed Site Professional hired by the owner, is still doing the risk characterization of the site. Four neighboring wells have been tested with non-detect for petroleum products. Six PVC pipes have been installed to allow the application of a petroleum mitigation product to treat residual pockets of oil that cannot be removed. The landscape will eventually be restored to original grades. Brem wanted to know the name of the remediation product and whether the Board has received reports from the LSP. Fantasia will follow up.

Lyme Disease Presentation – Fantasia has not been able to find a medical professional for the informational night. It was suggested that the Board check with local medical schools. Students or staff with an interest in Lyme might want to participate. The Board agreed that Lyme continues to be a high priority due to case incidences. Carlisle could be a living lab for collection of data on Lyme for an interested researcher

YE Grant Spending - \$510.73 in PHEP money must be spent by 6/30/10. Fantasia said one item would be installation of the HAM antenna at the police station. The cost would be (\$752). The Board agreed to pay up to \$500 for the antennae. The town will need to cover the remaining costs. Fantasia asked for IT support to get the office Blackberry operational. She cannot access the town email account because of fire walls. Board members suggested contacting Sprint for assistance.

Sanitarian Resumes – Six have been submitted. The deadline is May 28th. The Board will review in June. Rates for similar positions in other towns range from \$25/hr for an employee to \$40/hr consultant.

Temporary Food Service Permits - The First Religious Society submitted applications for the Strawberry Festival, Memorial Day Lunch and two Coffee House events serving dinner. ServSafe certifications for their volunteers have all expired. The Board is arranging for a local class in late June or early fall. The Board agreed to issue the permits without requiring current certifications since the people in charge of the events were all previously certified and plan to renew their certifications.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Hazardous Waste Collection - Galligan and Fantasia attended the collection. Galligan reported that 88 vehicles attended with a final count of 34 full and 69 half loads. A half load is up to ten pounds or ten gallons. A full load is up to 25 gallons or pounds. The collection which was operated by Clean Harbors ran smoothly with the exception of the second vehicle, which was a truck with a trailer containing six full loads. **The truck, which had a commercial plate, was owned by a resident and had a sticker.** Traffic became backed up to Lowell Road because of the time to unload. Some people had to wait a half hour. Galligan suggested the truck might have been handled differently, either by coming at a pre-set time or paying extra for the quantity.

Based on this year's experience, the BOH should consider the following for future collections of hazardous waste:

- Educate residents about the disposal of latex paint, which is not collectible as a hazardous waste
- Have residents do their dump run first to make it easier and quicker to remove the hazardous waste
- Workout a plan ahead of time regarding large loads of waste (e.g. consider options: limit collection to one full load per household, accept any size load but arrange a different time window for large loads, etc.
- Educate residents about the year-round option of taking hazardous waste to the Minuteman Facility in Lexington. This might be useful for mid-year home moves or hazardous waste that needs to be dealt with more than once a year.

Rocky Point (Laurel Hollow Condominium Association) – Fantasia reported that all four septic systems had passed Title 5 Inspections on various dates: 11/23/09 (units 1, 3), 2/3/10 (units 5, 10) 2/1/10 (units 6, 8) and 2/1/10 (units 2, 4). Septic tanks require annual pumping. The record on pump outs is incomplete but all tanks have been pumped as of this meeting. There are still no meter readings and no information on the financial guaranty intended to cover a catastrophic failure of the septic system and/or well. The Board said financials were very important. Fantasia will follow up with the property management company Acton Property management.

Emergency Dispensing Site Table Top Exercise – Acton Town Hall, June 9th, 8:30-12:30. This pandemic exercise is one of the public health deliverables for Region 4A. Attending will be Fantasia, Risso, Debbie Siriano (COA). The Board would like to encourage Local Emergency Planners or other town officials to attend also.

Voluntary Well Testing – scheduled for 6/3, 6/4 and 6/5. The Board has agreed to pay for the testing of the six center wells identified by DEP as having been impacted by MTBE. The Board is concerned that owner may not be maintaining the filtration systems due to the expense. Testing results will also help the Board assess ongoing water quality issues in the center. (Holland arrived).

Foss Farm Community Gardens – The following people were present for the discussion: John Lee (Annandale Farms), Sylvia Willard (Conservation Administrator), Jack O'Connor (Foss Farm Manager).

Following a complaint from one of the gardeners about the use of fresh goat bedding as cover for plants by some of the gardeners, Board members discussed the nuisance and possible health risks associated with this practice. Caddell had done a literature search and spoke with staff at the Division of Animal Health Care, Mass. Dept of Agriculture, Cornell University, and U Mass School of Public Health. There appears to be universal agreement that manure needs to be processed, or actively managed, as part of an overall good agricultural process. There are various ways of doing this. Passive treatment involves aging and environmental impacts to breakdown pathogens. Composting is a form of active treatment and involves turning, mixing and applying additives. It is more effective in breaking down the microorganisms. Non-composted manure should not be applied within 120 days of harvest. It also needs to be incorporated into the soil not spread on growing plants.

Holland, who has a dairy goat farm that provides some of the bedding to farmers, said it is important to ask the right question when getting opinions. Deep bedding is not the same as fresh, dry bedding. Deep bedding is hay bedding that is allowed to accumulate in the pens or stockpiles. This turns the bottom straw into a wet mass. Holland produced a bucket of two day old bedding so that the Board could see that it was clean and odorless with hardly any

solid waste. Urine and urea are typically gone after one to two days in the sun. The straw acts as mulch, keeping down weeds, retaining moisture in the soil, providing habitat for the earthworms thereby putting organic matter back into the soil. He has been using straw bedding for over ten years in his own garden. It is spread on 3" seedlings which have a 30-60 day growing season. He does not believe the bedding adds any more e.coli exposure than would be found on the soles of shoes. He does not use wet bedding. His goat herd is regularly tested for disease and the milk produced consistently exceeds MA standards. He and his wife are known for taking exemplary care of the animals and their habitat.

John Lee who manages Annandale Farm does not believe the fresh straw bedding is a problem. It is a common agricultural process. There is no tetanus or salmonella risk from its use. There is some E. coli but certainly not to the levels that would cause disease. Waste matter is from ruminants which are very different from meat eating animals. Holland noted that use of the bedding is a sustainable practice. He has been providing it to Hutchins Farms, an organic grower, for years. There is probably less bacteria in the straw than the soil.

Brem explained that the Board had received a letter from a Foss Farm gardener complaining about the bedding. Galligan said the specific complaints involved odor, flies, biting insects and rodents. Holland disagreed that the bedding would cause these problems since he has not observed them. Brem said the key is to maintain and manage the bedding in order to prevent infestations.

Jack O'Connor, manager of the Foss Farm Community Gardens, said there are 100 plots with 60 gardeners. He has not observed any nuisance problems nor has he received complaints. Use of the bedding seems to be a fairly benign practice at a few plots. Initially there may be a faint barn smell, but it typically goes away within two weeks. Sylvia Willard said she has not used the straw because she has no way of getting it to her garden. She has seen the straw placed in May. Foss Farm soil does not hold water so the mulch is helpful. The straw continues to dry out through July and the wind also helps. It is eventually broken down into the soil prior to the harvest. O'Connor said there is no horse or cow manure spread on the gardens, although some gardeners use composted manure from Great Brook Farm, which is in fact only aged manure.

Brem suggested that the Board separate the problem into two issues: first - the letter of complaint from the Hums about the nuisances created by the fresh bedding; second - whether there are health risks in using the bedding as mulch for growing plants intended for consumption. To address the first, he suggested that O'Connor keep an eye on the gardens and report to the Board if he observes any nuisances such as infestations, odors, or unacceptable growing practices. O'Connor agreed. Since O'Connor was unaware of problems or complaints at the present time, there does not seem to be a need for Board intervention other than monitoring. Galligan said that it would be best if all parties could work together to resolve the issue. It is important for all parties to continue to be vigilant, particularly since this is a community garden. Fantasia said Steve Hinton, who uses the straw on his plot, sent an email asking that the Board not take action this year because some of the material has already been placed. In a follow up telephone call, he asked that any changes be delayed until the next growing season.

Brem asked to have a letter sent to the Hums stating that at the present time the Board is not convinced that a nuisance situation exists as a result of the straw bedding. The Board will ask the garden manager to monitor the area on behalf of the Board of Health and the Conservation Commission. Should a problem arise, a report will be required immediately.

As for the health risks, Brem suggested that the Board look into the matter further since there seems to be different opinions. Fresh produce is not regulated by the Food Code so there is no reason for the Board to intervene. It is expected that consumers will clean the produce in preparation for eating. The Board was surprised that fresh produce is not regulated. Fantasia said she checked with Michal Moore of the Food Protection Program. Currently fresh produce is exempt from regulations.

Caddell remained concerned about the potential health risks both as they might affect neighboring gardeners and also the public at large who may purchase the produce. There is no guaranty that someone purchasing a vegetable or fruit will take the proper precautions before eating. He felt it was the Board's responsibility to advise against any product or practice that could have a detrimental effect on a member of the public such as someone with a

compromised immune system. Holland disagreed noting the long history of the practice without consequent problems. Galligan thought the Board could make a recommendation about best practices. Holland said the straw bedding was considered a best practice. Fantasia said she had spoken with Mike Cahill of the Dept. of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Health. He does not favor the practice of using fresh bedding as mulch. Spreading it over growing plants is not good and wastes any organic nutrient value. The straw should be worked into the soil 120 days prior to harvest of root vegetables and a minimum 90 days for staked plants such as corn or tomatoes.

Brem again suggested addressing the points separately so that the board will have sufficient time to research the matter more and to avoid having this year's gardeners remove what they have already spread. He suggested the Board consider recommendations rather than regulations. Risso thought the Board should also consider affects on the other gardeners. This is a community garden not a private backyard. Willard said the area is not fenced and wildlife can be found in the area leaving waste. Galligan said it was clear that there was no consensus on the Board and that more study was needed. Caddell understood that it was too late to make changes this year, but wants the Board to develop a policy for the future. He is convinced, based on his professional background and research that there is a potential risk. Brem said the problem does not appear to have reached a threshold requiring immediate action. There is time to prepare for next year. Risso agreed that there is no data tying the practice to illness, but he wants to give people time to adjust to any changes. Holland felt a common sense approach is more effective than a regulation. Lee agreed saying that just because there is no FDA regulation on the practice does not mean that the board needs to control it. He would prefer to follow the recommendations of the FDA and Farm Bureau. Brem favors a policy over a regulation.

The Board will take the following action: advise the Foss Farm gardeners that no changes in the use of fresh straw bedding will be required this year; the board intends to study the potential health risks from pathogens in preparation for developing a policy for next year; the Board will send a letter to the Hums explaining that the garden manager has been specifically asked to observe and report on any nuisance conditions at the garden during the current growing season.

There was no further business discussed. Meeting voted to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Fantasia
Recorder